

SELECT BOARD MEETING
Thursday, September 2, 2010 6:30 p.m.
First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall

Called to order: Ms. O'Keeffe called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Attendance: Stephanie O'Keeffe (Chair), Alisa Brewer, Aaron Hayden, Diana Stein (Clerk, pro tem), Jim Wald, Larry Shaffer (Town Manager), John Coull, Larry Kelly, John Musante (Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director), Brian Morton, Tina Swift, Dave Ziomek.

Introductory Remarks: Ms. O'Keeffe noted this is an unusual meeting called to discuss a replacement for the retiring Mr. Shaffer and since the meeting was being held, we could honor Mr. Wald's request to reopen the policy of flying commemorative flags on 9/11. The meeting would be taped as it cannot be shown live from this room.

Reconsideration of 9/11 Flag Policy

Ms. O'Keeffe summarized the history of our commemorative flag policy, the Town Meeting vote on flying the flags on 9/1, which was about 2:1 against doing so and the resultant compromise that the Select Board adopted of flying the flags one year and not flying them for the next two years, reflecting the Town Meeting vote. Mr. Wald felt the compromise was not adequate.

Mr. Kelly spoke of several historic events that set him back on his heels, and the fact that for him nothing compares to the events of 9/11. He felt that it is appropriate to fly the commemorative flags on Memorial Day, another day when we remember those in military service who died and that it would be equally appropriate to do so on 9/11.

Ms. Stein said she was likely the only one in the room who had a relative that worked close to Ground Zero and had to walk 100 blocks home on 9/11. This relative remains traumatized by the events of that day and feels flying commemorative flags is not appropriate, but putting flags at half staff is as the President's policy of NATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE AND REMEMBRANCE states.

Mr. Hayden lost two friends on 9/11 and his thoughts were colored by that. He felt that commemorative flags should be flown to recognize positive events, things we wished to celebrate—holidays such as President's Day, Memorial Day because in War people fight for ideals, July 4th and others.

Ms. Swift asked the Select Board to seriously reconsider flying the flags on all 9/11's as this event was an American Holocaust.

Mr. Coull thought the compromise was silly and that denial of flying the flags was unjustified.

Ms. O'Keeffe spoke of her patriotism but that the policy had to reflect the whole Town. Her proposal was to fly the flag every five years so that on the important anniversaries of 5, 10, 15, 20 years and so on the flags would be flown.

Ms. Stein made a motion for keeping the policy of flying the flags every third year but that motion did not get a second.

Mr. Wald said he saw no harm in doing it every year.

Ms. O'Keeffe moved to fly the commemorative flags on September 11th every five

years, to fall on the anniversary dates of 10 years (2011); 15 years (2016); 20 years (2021,) etc. This replaces the May 2008 policy of flying the commemorative flags on September 11th every three years. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hayden and voted 3 in favor (Hayden, O'Keeffe, Stein) and 2 opposed (Brewer, Wald).

It was agreed without a vote that Alisa would clean up the historical information about Select Board votes on flag policy in order to create a clear reference document and a current policy document.

Mr. Shaffer noted that on Saturday, 9/11, there would be a ceremony at the downtown fire station to honor the memory of those who died on that day in 2001. Details will be posted on the Town web site.

Plans for Interim Town Manager and Transition Period

The Select Board accepted Mr. Shaffer's retirement as of September 30, 2010. Ms. O'Keeffe stated the possibilities: do we do or forget a search, just appoint the current Assistant Town Manager to the Town Manager's position, and as a permanent or interim Town Manager? What is John Musante's opinion?

Mr. Musante made three points:

1. He thanked Mr. Shaffer for his strong leadership and accomplishments
2. He appreciated the renewed energy toward economic development and zoning
3. He said he would like to be considered as the interim and/or permanent Town Manager and believes he has the skills and experience.

Mr. Shaffer noted that he had seen John Musante up close, noting his absolute intelligence, creativity and that he was certain that Mr. Musante would be ready to go as October 1.

A discussion ensued about whether we should wait until the Select Board meeting of September 13th so that the Town could have a chance to weigh in.

Mr. Coull spoke in favor of appointing Mr. Musante and was shocked that the room was not filled with interested persons. He stated that Mr. Musante could help us on the things that are in place, following the path that Mr. Shaffer started us on. He agreed the appointment needs to be defensible and was confident that the public would weigh in.

Ms. O'Keeffe read a prepared list of pros and cons to appointing Mr. Musante (see attached). The public was invited to send comments to the Select Board.

(selectboard@AmherstMA.gov)

The Select Board agreed without a vote that John Musante is the logical, appropriate and popular choice to fill the Town Manager's position after Larry's retirement; that we would consider all the pros and cons of doing so without an interim appointment or search process; and that we would then act accordingly, at our 9/13 meeting after hearing from the public.

Other issues:

Coffee Hour with UMass Students:

Ms. O'Keeffe noted that she would like to begin coordinating the Coffee Hour with

UMass students, UMass administration representatives, and Town representatives for 5:30 on October 4th, to precede that evening's Select Board meeting and it was agreed to without a vote.

Ms. O'Keeffe commented on two future meetings of possible interest:

The 9/24 Municipal Law meeting in Holyoke was not really relevant for our Select Board as well as having a charge of \$50 per person and

The 10/15 MMA legislative breakfast in Hadley is relevant and worthwhile. However, there may be a conflict with the Chamber's legislative breakfast currently planned for the same date, but that the Chamber one might get rescheduled.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 7:36 was unanimously accepted.

Corrections welcome!

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Stein